

MAYOR'S COMMITTEE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

OCTOBER 20, 2008

MINUTES – Meeting in Newton City Hall – Cafeteria

PRESENT: Jane Brown, Rob Caruso (Co-Chair), Rosemary Larking, Doug Sweet (Co-Chair)
REGRETS: Lucie Chansky, Jini Fairley, Jeff Hutter, Barbara Lischinsky, Girard Plante, Heather Platt, Jason Rosenberg
STAFF: Beverly Droz (Human Services), Kathleen Cahill (Planning & Development)
GUESTS: none

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The meeting was called to order at 6:45pm and chaired by Doug Sweet.

Other Business:

Newton Taxpayers Aid Committee

Rosemary reported she received a letter from the Board of Aldermen approving her selection as the MCPD representative for this committee, replacing Linda Hiller. Rosemary will serve on it and report back to MCPD. It only meets a few times a year.

Johnny's Luncheonette

Rosemary reported the electric door has never worked. If you're disabled, you are seated in the back near the rest room and they have to remove stacks of high chairs from the area. The table seems too low. They have a new counter at the front window but it's too high. Kathleen will visit and measure.

Citizen's Bank in Newton Centre

Kathleen reported that she and Lowell have contacted the Mark Jurilla, the Vice President of Citizens Bank Branch on Centre Green, about addressing the heavy pull pressure on both the front and rear door of the bank. She will follow-up on his progress to get a response from Corporate about installing an automatic door opener.

Warren House

- Rosemary asked if the MCPD funded the playground when the Warren House opened, back around 1990. Recently the wood chips have been removed and replaced with sand. Sand is not accessible to wheelchairs. Doug will call Jason. Kathleen will check to see if CDBG funds were used to construct the playground.
- Her apartment was adaptable. They were supposed to make it accessible. She's had problems with the back door and stated it has been difficult getting it repaired correctly. The threshold was removed and now the door leaks cold air at the threshold and through the empty door handle hole. The ramp has a railing but it's not smooth. She can get down it but not onto the patio area due to another threshold there.
- Doug asked Bev to ask Bob DeLuca in Health to make a site visit and see if it's a health violation because of the cold weather.

Curb Cuts

Kathleen passed out an informational map showing the locations of the curb cuts completed in 2008. There were 23 locations with an average of 2 cuts per location, and a range of 1-4 cuts. There were clusters of curb cuts in Newton Centre and along Woodland Road in Auburndale.

CDBG Access Project Status Report – presented by Kathleen Cahill

This report was submitted to MCPD by email before this meeting for their review. Per usual it is copied here within the minutes. Discussion notes follow each topic.

Accessible Pedestrian Signals (Project CD0703C. Expended, \$28,620; Budget balance: \$13,530). The installation of APS-10 audible pedestrian signals at the intersections of Walnut and Cabot and Beacon and Chestnut has been completed. Centre St. and Centre Ave. is a priority intersection; however that is on-hold until pending the completion of a pedestrian improvement study conducted by VHB. Washington St. and Commonwealth Ave. is another priority intersection. VHB is currently doing the design work for this intersection. We are hoping that the project will include accessible pedestrian signals funded from traffic mitigation funds. The installation of APS 10s at Washington and Beacon, Commonwealth Avenue by St. Ignatius and Beacon and Hammond St. near McElroy Commons of Boston College will be completed in October.

It was noted that Boston College will pay for ½ of the costs of the APS in their location, and these have just been completed. Kathleen will check with Barbara regarding the areas near Arborpoint on Washington St. We are still waiting to hear from the Traffic Improvement Study regarding the Washington St. – Commonwealth Ave area and the Centre Street – Centre Ave location.

Newton Centre Playground Walkway (Project CD0703A. Expended, \$30,000; Budget balance, \$0). The walkway is complete and the accessible playground is open.

It was noted a dedication will be planned but the date has not been set.

Norumbega Gardens (Project CD0903B. Expended: \$4,952.38 Budget balance, \$52,829.05). Project includes accessible improvements to interior pathways in the Norumbega Garden Apartments, a complex operated by the Housing Authority. Work began September 16, 2008, 35% complete; expected to be 100% complete by late November.

It was noted that no trees have had to be destroyed.

Charlesbank Playground (Project CD0903C. Expended: \$0 Budget balance, \$30,000). Project includes the installation of a ramped concrete walkway with metal handrails, designed to complement new play equipment, benches, and picnic tables and allow access through the park.

It was noted that the plan is in the final design stage but the work will not happen until the spring.

Coletti-Magni Park (Project CD0903D. Expended: \$0 Budget balance, \$30,000). Project includes installation of accessible sidewalks around the park's perimeter as well as an accessible ramp and drinking fountain. Work began September 2, 2008, accessible pathway has been installed.

It was noted that the park project is in progress now. Rob and Kathleen visited the park today and they made some changes to the size of the concrete pad for the water fountain in order to optimize the functionality of the fountain. The slope on the pathways is excellent.

Curb Cuts (Project CD0903G, Expended \$58,689 Budget balance, \$27,400). Funds were used to complete the following curb cuts: Auburn and Washington (4/widening of island) Mason-Rice (6), Temple and Myrtle (2), JFK Circle (2).

It was noted that the FY08 Curb Cut project was closed and the funds were transferred to FY09 Curb Cuts. There remains \$27,400 in the FY09 Curb Cut project and all outstanding FY08 DPW bills have been paid in full. Kathleen presented a list of potential curb cuts. Two priority locations are Sumner St & Gibbs/Everett & Sumner. Kathleen explained that Marianne Mahoney, a fifth grader in a wheelchair, lives in this area.

Marianne would like exert her independence and be able to travel the quarter mile from home to Newton Center, however, the sidewalks and curb cuts are in such bad shape that she must travel with a companion on the street. Marianne, her mother, Lowell and Kathleen traveled her route from home to Newton Centre and noted the problem areas. Kathleen also mentioned that there was an article in the TAB last Wednesday, October 15th featuring Marianne and the accessible improvements that were completed on Mason Rice, the school she attends. The Committee voiced their support of completing these curb cuts and Kathleen will work with DPW to insure that the sidewalks are repaired. Kathleen also mentioned Oak and Webster in Auburndale as another priority location brought to her attention by Rob Caruso. Rob pointed out that the curb cuts are in poor shape and they abut a popular neighborhood park. The next round of funding is in July 2009. The goal is to do a few curb cuts at a time and then re-evaluate the list, with regard to the remaining funds.

Retrofitting Curb Cuts (Project CD0903E, Budget balance, \$6,000). A list of 7 locations (Homer Street, Beacon St. @ Dalton, Centre Green @ Langley, 1188 Centre Green, 82 Lincoln Street, 100 Walnut Street, 28 Commonwealth St) (19 curb cuts) have been identified by committee members and staff. Work will take place in November.

FY09 Funds (Project CD0903A. \$15,045) – This project represents funds available for project(s) to be determined.

DISCUSSION

The Committee agreed that these funds will remain unallocated for now however, many members of the Committee stated that they would be willing to use some of these funds to assist in the completion of the curb cuts on Sumner & Gibbs/Everett & Sumner for Marianne.

MINUTES

It was noted that the 9/15/08 minutes will have to be approved at the next meeting.

There was a motion to adjourn at 7:58pm.

The next meeting will be on Monday, November 17 at 6:30pm in the cafeteria.

Respectfully submitted by Bev Droz